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PROGRAM NBC Nightly News STATION WRC TV
NBC Network

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SUBJECT Fate of Soviet Spy

TOM BROKAW: While that was going on in a Baltimore courtroom today, there was a fascinating development in the case of Nicholas Shadrin, a Soviet naval officer who defected to this country in the late '50's. He disappeared while on a mission for the CIA ten years ago, and tonight NBC's Lloyd Dobyns is able to report the defection of a Russian spy turned up some brutal news about what happened to Shadrin.

LLOYD DOBYNS: Nicholas Shadrin, a Soviet defector who worked for the FBI and the CIA, disappeared from in front of the Votive Church in Vienna, Austria on December 20th, 1975. It has taken ten years to find out what happened to him.

Shadrin and his wife defected in 1959. In the Soviet Union, Shadrin was tried in absentia as a traitor and sentenced to death.

Despite that, American intelligence agencies eventually sent Shadrin to Vienna, a city filled with everybody's spies. Shadrin thought his job was to pretend to be a double agent. In fact, the FBI and CIA used him as bait in a scheme to attract a highly placed Soviet intelligence agent. Shadrin disappeared. Mrs. Shadrin blamed Washington.

EWA SHADRIN: I'm convinced that he was sacrificed by the United States. For whatever reason they had in mind, either political or international, they just simply sacrificed Nick.

GENERAL WILSON: I think he indirectly was betrayed. As I was briefed, there was no countersurveillance of his meeting. He was alone. He was unprotected. And the Soviets simply fulfilled one of their basic laws, which, in shorthand, reads "death to traitors."

DOBYNS: General Wilson was right. Intelligence sources now say that Vasily Urchenko, the most recent Soviet defector, has said that the KGB kidnaped Shadrin and, on that same day, killed him. That Soviet agent the FBI thought it was protecting was part of an elaborate KGB scheme to get Shadrin and carry out the Soviet death sentence.

The CIA, the Department of State and the Department of Justice all say no comment. Mrs. Shadrin declined to comment. But NBC News has learned that after ten years of waiting, Ewa Shadrin has been told that her husband, the spy who was sent out into the cold, is dead.

Lloyd Dobyns, NBC News.